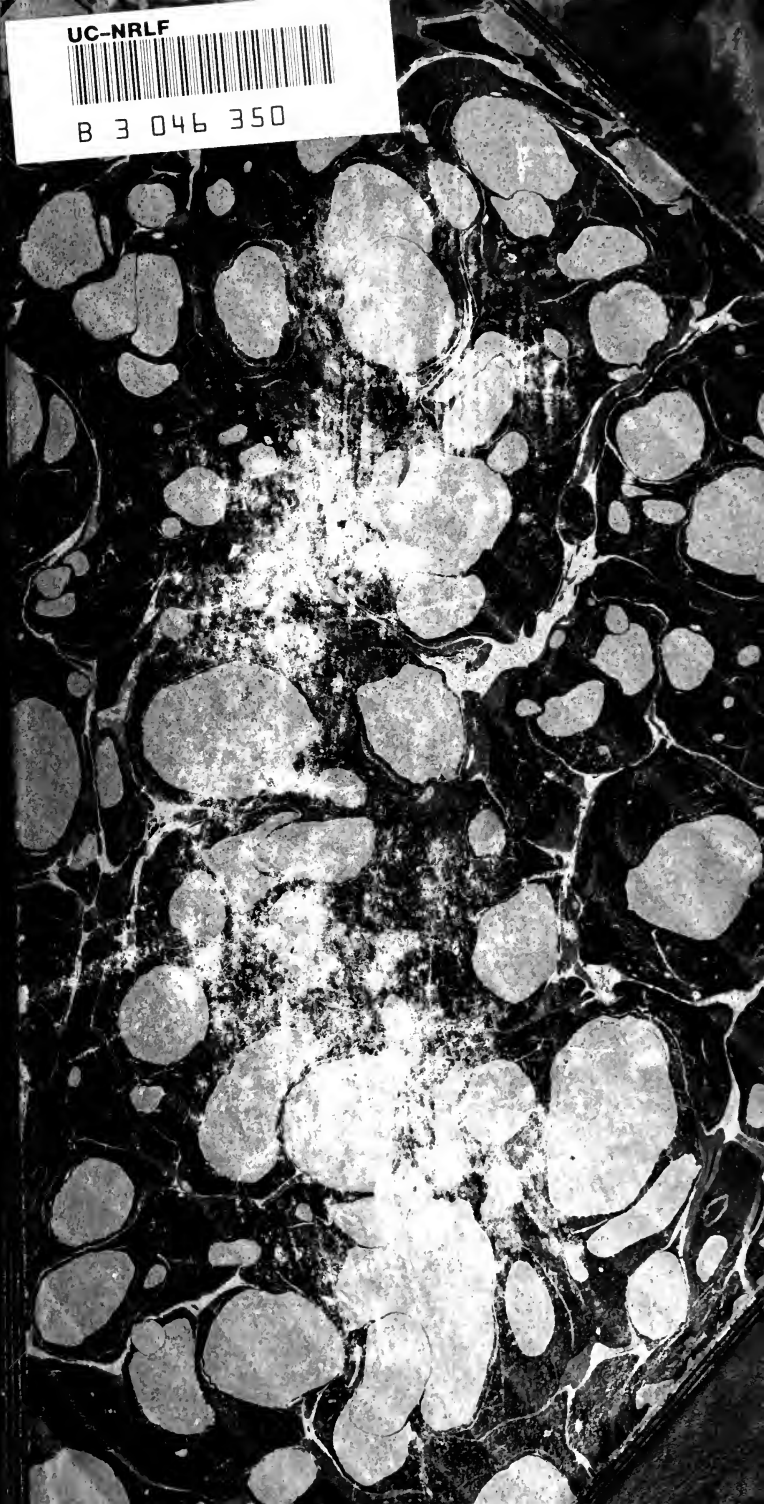


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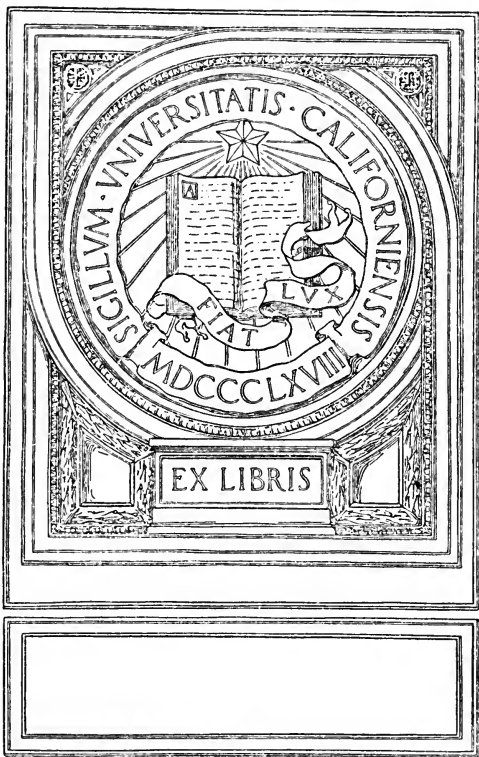


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John Eustace Gibber.



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SOME REMARKS

ON THE

PRESENT STUDIES AND MANAGEMENT

OF

ETON SCHOOL.

BY A PARENT.

FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON :

JAMES RIDGWAY, AND SONS, PICCADILLY

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TO THE
ALBANY

PREFACE.

I do not know that any apology is necessary for discussing, in a public Pamphlet, the merits of a public Institution. Whatever the abstract right may be---however good or bad---the moral right that every parent of a boy at a public school has to use his best efforts towards improving the advantages of his son, cannot in reason be disputed. Not that this right is to be used in an indiscriminate---much less an insolent and contemptuous manner. I should be very sorry if I could be guilty of using a word personally disrespectful to any one. I wish the prosperity of Eton, and, therefore, wish to see many present obstacles to its advancement removed.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THE rapid demand for a third edition of these Remarks is highly satisfactory to the Author; inasmuch as it tends to shew that the importance of the subject he has discussed is properly appreciated by those whose interests are mainly concerned. The Author would fain hope, that the Governors of Eton will not confound a demand for reasonable improvement, with a cry for total and indiscrimi-

nate revolution. There is neither magnanimity nor wisdom in resisting what is proved to be expedient. Surely, the idea of conducting a great public School on principles that have no harmony with the opinions and wishes of the public, is an egregious folly. But the public---I mean the opulent and liberal, but, at the same time, thinking and intelligent, aristocracy of the public---look with confidence to the adoption of prudent and essential alterations at Eton. It is the duty, no less than the interest, of the government of the School to concede them.

I have already stated that I shall probably discuss, at some future period, the manner in which the Collegers are treated at Eton. For the present, I am disposed to keep my facts and opinions from the Public, in the hope that the Governors of the College will see the necessity of immediately ameliorating—or rather of totally altering—the condition of the boys who are more especially entrusted to their care.

This I promise the Public: that in exposing the manifold wrongs endured by the Collegers at Eton, I will expose the truth. I will use neither disguise nor compromise. What I know certainly, I will set down fearlessly. But I repeat it---I trust the good sense and virtue of the Provost and Fellows of Eton will anticipate my intentions.

REMARKS,

&c.

It would be a needless waste of words to set about shewing, that, at the present moment, a spirit of uncompromising enquiry and reformation is developing its full energies throughout the country. It is a spirit which will not be contemned, nor can it be resisted, with impunity. It has summoned every public institution before its tribunal; and woe be to those which have made no preparation for trial! Yet it is impossible not to see that there are some public bodies which have formed the resolution of defying and encountering public opinion, and have staked their hopes of existence on a firm and unflinching--nay, a contemptuous and scornful rejection of the demands of a reasoning and enlightened age. There *are* men whose

wisdom consists in a stubborn refusal to improve. With a blindness, which baffles explanation, because it leads directly to their own downfall, they hate reform as if it were revolution, being apparently ignorant that they are proceeding the right way to ensure a revolution which will be no reform. But they are wrestling with a power that will laugh to scorn their puny endeavours. Their brazen gates will be but as touchwood before the strong arm of the giant. With such men, I fear, any exhortation on my part will have but little weight. The wisest suggestion that could be offered---the most modest remonstrance that could be made---will by them be received with the same grin of contempt, and the same scowl of hate ; but I shall not be deterred from giving advice, because it is likely to be rejected ; nor shall I fear to assail the citadel of bigotry, because I feel assured that the garrison will defend it to its last gun. Amongst other public institutions in England, which have signalized themselves by an undeviating adherence to antiquated errors, I am compelled to instance Eton School as holding an unfortunate pre-eminence. Whilst every other public school has chosen the wiser part, and accommodated itself to the demands of the age by timely and judicious reformation, Eton alone seems resolved to

make a stand against improvement, and to fight single-handed the battle of prejudice and wrong.

Many of the more notorious and glaring defects of that foundation have often been brought before the public; but the weapons of opinion have hitherto fallen nearly harmless on its brazen armour. The events, however, that have marked the last few years of English History, are certainly pregnant with fearful admonitions to all public bodies, bidding them prepare against the scrutinies with which a vigilant and informed nation will, undoubtedly, visit its trusts. Yet, strange to say, the public business of Eton School is essentially, if not exactly, the same that it was 50 ---nay, for what I know, 100 years ago. But since it is probable that many of my readers are unacquainted with Eton, I will preface my observations with a brief sketch of the constitution of that establishment. The College was founded in 1441, by King Henry VI. It consists of a Provost, Seven Fellows, one Head or Upper Master, and one Lower; together with 70 Students. All that a gentleman's education in those days embraced, was, undoubtedly, provided by the Statutes for those 70 collegers, or students. Moreover, it was provided *gratuitously*; but I shall reserve my remarks on

this subject to some future occasion. These collegers are elected off to King's College, Cambridge, as fast as vacancies occur at that foundation, which has the same number of fellowships that there are collegers at Eton, and is solely supplied with members from that source.

Such is the *statutable* foundation of Eton College; but there are, in addition, 10 Assistant Masters, or Tutors, who, however, are not members of the College, but are gentlemen, almost unexceptionably, from King's College, Cambridge, engaged by the upper and lower Masters to assist them in teaching the collegers and *oppidans*, or boys who do not belong to the foundation. These latter form the main bulk of the school, varying in number, of course; but the total of both sorts of students may be stated to be, in general, considerably upwards of 500.

The Provost is appointed by the Crown. The Fellows are elected by themselves and the Provost. The Head Master is appointed by the Provost; the Lower by the Provost and Fellows. The Provostship is very nearly an *autocratical* office. The school is divided into six forms; of which the sixth is the highest, and is the only one limited in its *number* of boys, which is never allowed to exceed 22. The fifth form consists of three divisions; the upper, middle, and lower

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heart; and construe 35 lines of Greek prose; generally Lucian. On Friday they repeat by heart the Homer which was construed on Wednesday and Monday, and the Virgil which was construed on Wednesday. They also construe 70 lines of Horace's Epistles or Satires, and 35 lines of Greek prose. On Saturday, they repeat by heart the Horace which was construed on the previous day; construe some 30 or 35 verses of the Poetæ Græci, together with some Greek Testament, and are examined in a few pages of Secker. No lessons are learnt in school hours. The boys are previously prepared in their lessons by their tutors, and the school-times are devoted to examination. All that is read over and above what we have stated, is called "private business." It is not required by the school, but is done by the tutors privately with their pupils. I have given the outline of what is called a "REGULAR WEEK;" but that is materially interrupted and curtailed by holidays, whether accidental or periodical.

There are also extra masters for teaching the French, Italian, and German languages, as well as writing, drawing, and arithmetic. Attendance on either of them is voluntary, and forms no integral part of the school business. Whether the business done with these masters ought not to be brought into closer contact, and more

intimate union with the regular business, greatly to the advantage and credit of the teachers, as well as the learners, I may, perhaps, discuss on some future occasion. The Duke of Newcastle, about six years ago, founded three scholarships for the best proficient in Classics and Divinity; each is tenable for three years, and is of the yearly value of £50; so that one falls vacant every twelve months. These scholarships are open to all students in the school, above a certain rank; the examiners are *never* public masters; and I will add, it would be better if they were never *private tutors*. In fact, the argument which excludes a public assistant, ought, in its proper consequences, to exclude *any* one connected with the school. The scholars have to attend chapel twice every whole holiday, and once every half holiday. And now, I hope, I have said enough to enable persons who are not so fortunate as to be "Eton men," to understand the following remarks.

I shall be grossly misunderstood, if any intention of triumph or insult be attributed to me, when I proclaim, with the fearlessness of conscious truth, that, if the interest of Eton is to be maintained, its abuses must be reformed. The world, indeed, has for a long time been amused with a vague probability of future amendment, some scanty glimmerings of hope, that if some

fortunate concurrence of accidents should ever take place, if one man should have compassion enough to relent, and another have energy enough to propose, and if divers other equally substantial and tangible possibilities should all happily come to pass, why then we should see SOME GREAT CHANGES AT ETON. What these portentous changes---these melancholy phantasms of distempered heads, which have scared the imaginations of some respectable persons, REALLY ARE, the uninitiated have not yet been allowed to understand.

At other times, the matter is put in a different light; and an objection to reform is drawn from the very constitution of the College, inasmuch as there appears to be a doubt WHERE and HOW, reform is to begin. The head master, being but the servant of the Provost, can do nothing against the will of his employer, in the regulation of the school; and how the Provost, who, for the last twenty-four years, has had nothing to do with the practical management of the boys, can venture to meddle with the existing order of things, seems to involve a mystery---to make a gordian knot much too difficult for ordinary knuckles to untie. I really blush to notice such unbecoming and frivolous juggling with common reason. But I fear that such nonsense is entertained in high quarters, with a

fondness and pertinacity, which shows how anxiously any pretence for defying improvement is hunted out of the den of folly. If the objection I have stated mean any thing, it is this; that there is in the constitution of Eton College an inherent principle, directly repulsive of reform. But I warn the advocates of so stupid and pernicious a doctrine against its open avowal. The public care nothing for the collision or adjustment of the ruling interests of the school; they demand the reformation of abuse; and they will not be checked in their demand by any unintelligible prevarications about WHERE the responsibility of the reform is to lie. My own opinion of this formidable difficulty is very easily explained; the head master is appointed by the Provost, and is certainly removable at his pleasure; but he is also ENTRUSTED WITH THE RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF THE BOYS; and if there be any change, the adoption of which HE thinks essential to the good of the school, but which the Provost resists as inexpedient, there is no alternative left for the master, BUT TO RESIGN.

It is time, however, to specify some of the more serious and prominent defects of the school. In doing this, I shall not hunt about in search of objections to the subordinate parts of its discipline; I am influenced solely by a regard for

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its better government; and I should be sorry if any of my expressions gave personal offence. But whilst I deprecate unbecoming asperity, I will set forth my opinions with that manful and fearless resolution which the subject demands.

A public school is a preparation for the University, and by its adequate or imperfect execution of this purpose, its good or ill government must be determined. By this I will judge Eton; nor can I imagine any denomination of reasoning animals who could possibly object to such a criterion. The education provided at Eton is insufficient for its purpose in every department, in religion, letters, and science. To begin with the most important; there is but ONE religious lesson in the week; and as even that solitary one is missed, as often as by the will of the Calendar, or the Provost, Saturday is a half holiday, I cannot—with due allowance made for vacations—possibly suppose that there are more than 25 religious lessons in the year. It is very remarkable, that, whereas no possible contingency, short of an entire week of holidays, is allowed to interfere with two lessons of Homer, Horace, and Virgil, the *religious* instruction of the week is so entirely the sport of saints' days and holidays, that not even the highest boys can read one of the longer Gospels in twelve months. Moreover, the lessons being given at such great

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and uneven intervals of time, it is impossible for any but very industrious students to retain a connected view of what they read. Now, I defy a contradiction of this statement; and I ask whether every parent of a boy at Eton has not a right—nay, whether it is not his most solemn duty to God and his conscience, to remonstrate against this neglect of the most important article in education? Nor do I complain solely of the omission of what is good, but of the practice of that which is positively evil. The boys are not only defectively instructed in the nature and doctrines of Christianity, but are most perniciously taught to regard some of its highest duties as a matter of annoyance and coercion. They are COMPELLED to attend chapel, exclusive of Sundays, at the least four, very often five, sometimes even six, times in the week. The evil might, in some degree, be mitigated, if worship on the week days were devoutly performed; but the boys are neither expected to bring Prayer Books into Church, nor to join in the service. The prayers are read in a slovenly manner, being usually accomplished in 25 minutes. Very frequent COMPULSORY attendance on Divine Worship, even if *properly* done, can have none but a bad effect on MEN—and men, too, of religious minds; but upon the YOUNG the consequences are incalculably disastrous.

Upon the young, who generally mistake associations of ideas for opinions, and with whom inveteracy of custom is equivalent to energy of conviction, the effects of this system are doubly deplorable. Attendance on church becomes, in after life, an irksome and uncomfortable duty, and that which was intended by a merciful Creator to be an everlasting memorial of his care and benevolence to man,—to be the medicine of sorrow, and the purification of thought, is converted, by a stupid and obstinate adherence to forms, whose single claim to respect consists in the longevity of their mischief, into an uneasy and unprofitable ceremony; thus God is robbed of his mercy, and man of his consolation. Perhaps I may seem irreverent, and to be using terms more solemn than befits the occasion; but no words CAN express the awful responsibility incurred by those who deliberately, and in spite of demonstrative reason, persist in tampering with the eternal interests of souls. The matter I speak of is nothing temporary or trivial; either I or my adversaries are wrong; if I am *in error*, in the name of religion let me be confuted by some argument. I profess with the most fervent sincerity, I know not even the ghost of a reason, which could be conjured up against me out of the grave of rotten antiquity. But if I am *right*, shame and dishonour to those who have neither the wisdom

nor the courage to acknowledge refutation, and to amend error, even though their obstinacy imperils higher interests than those of this world? Nor is it only on the week days, that I complain of religion being neglected at Eton. Even the Sabbath is not honoured with proper reverence. That day, which now, thank God, brings religious comfort and instruction to the poorest cottager, brings but little of either to the Eton student. It is really hard to believe, that a rich ecclesiastical establishment, founded for the especial purpose of educating persons for the Church, should inculcate, in the consequences of its mis-government, a most wicked contempt for the Sabbath. The upper boys, on that day, are required to learn some—perchance licentious—lines of the Poetæ Græci; the *Remove* are drawing maps; both are possibly engaged also in writing a theme, which, whatever the THEORY of the matter may be, is of no practical service to religion or morals. The fourth form are construing, or preparing to construe, a few verses of the Greek Testament, which they are not taught for the sake, or with the possibility of promoting religion, but for the inoculating of them with the virus of Greek Grammar rules.

I pronounce this to be a disgraceful reproach to the school. We have a right to demand, that, in a religious establishment, Sunday shall be a time

The whole book — another lie — it is all
either religious or moral — another
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day of religious instruction; and sure I am that this holy day cannot be systematically perverted to secular pursuits, without entailing grievous ill consequences. I am aware I may be met with the rejoinder, that these consequences HAVE NOT BEEN produced; and though the public instruction of the school be confessedly no greater than I have stated it to be, yet, provided the instruction is communicated SOMEHOW, the MANNER is of little importance. In answer to which, I say, that, even on the supposition of no evil having arisen, this is no reason against remedying what you cannot but admit to be wrong. And if it be urged, that, for no better reason than this, you may safely persevere in a vicious course of education, you throw up the whole question of education at once; all preference of mode is at an end. If good habits can possibly spring as the natural produce of evil, it can no longer signify what habits you engender. Is any man prepared to maintain such a position? yet there is no alternative between this and the admission of the justice of my reasoning. But the truth is, incalculable evil HAS BEEN produced. When I assert that, men educated in this habitual disregard of the sanctity of the Sabbath, and this profane mode of attending service on week days, have generally felt a disinclination to attend public wor-

ship altogether, I certainly assert no more than such men themselves are ready enough to admit. The evil which has arisen to individuals, is, in fact, enormous ; but if I extend the sphere of my contemplation, and regard the matter as affecting public and national interests, it assumes a more serious aspect, and furnishes subject for graver and more melancholy reflection.

I need not point out how large a proportion of the English Clergy have received public educations. Will the most bigotted advocate of the Church, as it is, deny, that, for the last 150 years, a secular spirit has been making great way, especially amongst the upper orders of the hierarchy ? And can it be doubted, that, if the Clergy had been better instructed in the solemn nature of their high and holy duties---if a deeper reverence for their profession---a more earnest devotion of their best energies to the service of their Lord---a more profound sense of their obligation to promote HIS interest, and a less interested desire to further THEIR OWN---in a word, can it be doubted, if the Clergy had been more religiously educated, that, instead of the tempest, whose gathering howls are now threatening their existence, the same sunny and serene sky would be now smiling over their heads, which gilded and glorified their most palmy days ? I ask the question in candid and sober sincerity ; I crave an answer in the same spirit.

I have proceeded on the supposition, that religious knowledge is neglected at Eton. But though this be unanswerably true in reference to the PUBLIC instruction, we are told that this defect is made up by "private business." This private business does not relate exclusively to religion; what I have to say on this head, therefore, will be equally applicable to the other branches of instruction. The very term "private business" in a PUBLIC school, involves an absurdity; for it can only be understood to mean something which, to a certain amount, will remedy the defects of the school. But this, of course, is ADMITTING THE EXISTENCE OF DEFECTS. If any such exist, I demand their removal: and if you assert that they CANNOT BE REMOVED, you admit the incapacity of a public school to give the full benefits of education. But what is the real amount of good produced by this "private business?" In the first place, a large number of boys are not private pupils;* and when we

* By a curious regulation, the collegers are prohibited from being private pupils. I believe the prohibition arose from a desire to save expense: but as the expense is VOLUNTARY, I cannot see the propriety of forbidding it. In the mean time, I recommend the government of the school, in whatsoever person or persons that abstract idea may reside, to curtail the COMPULSORY expenses of the collegers, which are infamous in amount, and perfectly unjustifiable

take into the account how much of the masters' time is occupied by the public business of the school, we cannot suppose that they have it in their power to give more than between two and three hours' private instruction, weekly, to their respective pupils; the utmost that can be effected by such means, is very limited---certainly, by no means equal to a remedy of the very deficient public instruction of the school. The good that can be accomplished, even under the present system, must be precarious and uncertain, inasmuch as it wholly depends on the character of the tutor---on his industry, ability, attainments, and judgment. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that these qualities will vary materially in ten different persons. In fact, with the most earnest endeavours on the part of the assistant masters, and supposing (what is far from the truth) that every boy were a private pupil, private instruction can never obviate the public deficiencies. I am sure every Eton man will bear me out in my assertion, that a knowledge of lessons, confined to the pupil-room, was never exacted with the severity, or

in principle. I shall not say more of the collegers AT PRESENT, than this:—their morals are neglected—their comforts despised;—they are separated from the oppidans by many distinctions, every one of which, almost unexceptionably, is a degradation.

this is rather a mistake!

attended to with the diligence bestowed on public lessons. It cannot be otherwise. A tutor, engaged exclusively with his own pupils, many of whom live under his roof, and for all of whom he may naturally feel a kindly prejudice, cannot exert the same uncompromising inflexible discipline which is requisite, and which men generally feel little difficulty in enforcing in the public school rooms. As a last resource, we are referred to the fruits of the Newcastle scholarship for a proof of the adequate religious instruction furnished to the boys. I believe, that about thirty boys are generally candidates for this honour; but that which refers to the particular instruction of thirty boys, I cannot allow to be any argument at all for THE SCHOOL. No labour is spared in the preparation of boys for the scholarship. But even, in this case, I may express my dislike of the system of private instruction; for not only will one boy, whose tutor has bestowed unusual care upon him, have an advantage over another, but the time which HE has engrossed, has evidently been deducted from the rest of his tutor's pupils. As the scholarship is at present managed, it MAY BE as much a trial of what can be done for a boy by his tutor, as of what he can do for himself; I had infinitely rather see the candidates left to their own resources.

If this were done, under present circumstances, the standard of examination, which is only sustained by private instruction, must necessarily fall. In truth, the Newcastle scholarship is an annual exposure of the entire inadequacy of the system of the school ; for the public business, without other assistance, could never enable a boy to go through a single day's examination. It really is a very hard thing to find a reason for continuing the old course of things at Eton. The time of the masters, is, in many respects, wasted in a manner most laboriously unprofitable. In a regular week, every Remove and fifth form boy composes three original exercises ; the fourth form do four exercises, not original ; and the third, an UNKNOWN quantity. Upon the fairest calculation I can make, it is not possible for less than six hours, daily, of the assistant masters' time to be occupied in the revision of exercises alone. A most merciful Bill has lately passed the Legislature, whereby the cruelty of the Manchester manufacturer has been restrained, and his employment of labourers shaved down to a limited number of hours ; but what is twelve hours work in a cotton mill, compared with the same time bestowed on the correction of Latin, which, unless boys are much altered since our days, may be aptly denominated

Latin RUN MAD—Latin, which will, occasionally, put to the blush the classic purity even of an apothecary's label! And if the LATIN be such, what words shall paint the delights of a GREEK THEME, which, occasionally scares the understanding, if it do not subdue the fortitude of the luckless revisor? Now, may I not ask, what, in the name of common sense, can be the object of such a huge mass of composition? Even at the Universities, it is, to the multitude, of little or no use; for a man, who does not aspire to high honours, may take his degree without being required to do a copy of verses during the whole time of his residence. It is notorious, that ninety-nine persons out of one hundred, never write a bit of Latin after they have left school. It is equally notorious, that not one half of the school exercises at Eton, are done by their ostensible authors; and for this plain reason, because half the boys are really incapable of composing in a dead tongue; many that CAN, will not give themselves the trouble to cultivate so very useless an accomplishment.

It is the easiest task for an idle boy to evade; inasmuch as, however morally certain his master may be, that he has been assisted in his exercise, detection is nevertheless difficult, and comparatively, seldom effected. True it is, the student may only be occupied three hours in

doing three exercises, but the master must be occupied a long time in revising three exercises from each of his pupils; and this destruction of the tutor's time, is the most serious objection to the system; for the consequence of it is, that very little CAN BE READ by the boys at Eton. The highest boy there has, in the course of the week, to construe about 35 verses of some one of the lesser Greek poets, about 70 verses of Homer, Horace, and, generally, Virgil; these he also repeats by heart. He has, in addition, to construe the same quantity of Latin, and, also, Greek prose, principally Lucian. About the 30 highest boys manage, besides all this, to get through a Greek play, if a moderately short one, in A TWELVEMONTH; and this is the sum total of the public instruction. Occasional and periodical holidays, scattered over the year, deduct something considerable from the regular work. Making allowance for this, we may fairly state the annual reading of a boy in the highest class at Eton, to be about four books of Homer, three of Virgil, two books of the Satires of Horace, or their equivalent; as much Latin prose as would amount to a book and a half of one of Cicero's Treatises; about the same quantity of Greek prose, together with 1000, or 1100 lines of the lesser Greek poets. Now this course of reading is undeniably inadequate as a

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 preparation for college. Indeed, the Head Master of Eton plainly acknowledges as much; for he exacts the same quantity from boys 13 years old, that he does from those of 18.

It is a very remarkable fact, that, at Eton, the lowest boy in the fifth form, has a GREAT DEAL MORE to do, than the highest in the sixth; for he does exactly the same lessons, without the advantage of having read many of them before, and, of course, without having the same maturity and strength of intellect to learn by. That which a boy of 13 is capable of doing, cannot be sufficient for a young man who is entering college. The English Universities, are, almost annually, raising the standard of knowledge, which every one must possess, before he can belong to either of their bodies. It would be idle to inquire, whether the Governors of Eton have made the smallest correspondent effort to enable the boys to answer this increased demand on their scholarship and information; for not only has nothing worthy the name of an improvement been done during the last fifty years, but there seems to be a fixed resolution to resist all attempts at amendment, as if there were some talismanic charm in the old system; and as if that fairy fabric were destined to dissolve into air, the moment it was touched by the profane hand of reformation. The first step to be taken, if any

step ever is to be taken, at Eton, must consist in an entire abolition of the ridiculous system of original composition. As long as such an enormous proportion of the master's time is unprofitably wasted on the revision of exercises, sufficient time CANNOT be bestowed on the other studies of the boys. A tutor is, on an average, engaged two hours a day in the preparation of his pupils for shool; he is three hours IN school, and six hours revising exercises; the leisure time that he has over and above these eleven hours, is devoted, we suppose, to the recreation of that wonder working "private business!" Until the proportion of time thrown away on the correction of doggerel Latin, and that devoted to real instruction, is totally altered, no substantial good can be obtained. But, upon the supposition that some such alteration in the system MAY take place, I would suggest, that the three several divisions of the fifth form should read their respective and distinct books. The lower division, in which boys remain one year, might read two books of the Odyssey, two of the Anabasis, the Odes of Horace, and the Georgics of Virgil. This latter work, strangely enough, is totally neglected at Eton, where the WHOLE of the ÆNEID is read; yet, Virgil is incomparably a more fanciful and perfect poet in the Georgics, than in the Æneid. His sub-

ject in the one, did not allow him to abide by the cold rules of the Epic ; and, therefore, for that I know, the Georgics may be deemed defective compositions by persons who estimate the beauty of poetry by the arbitrary laws of the schools ; but I have yet to learn what there is in the six last books of the *Æneid*, with the exception of one or two bright episodes, to make the study of them so important a matter as it is made at Eton. But to proceed—the lower division might, in addition, read the *Bellum Catalinarium* of Sallust, together with the *De Senectute* and *Amicitia* of Cicero. ONE ORIGINAL exercise in the week would be quite enough ; but a weekly translation of a short Latin paragraph should be indispensable ; and, to be of use, should be done IN SCHOOL, WITHOUT the aid of a DICTIONARY. A boy should be taught, as much as possible, to trust to his own resources—in fact, TO APPLY the knowledge of words which he has already obtained. Translations thus managed, may be made infinitely useful ; as they are, at present, done at Eton, they are of no sort of service—indeed, rather teach a boy, as far as they teach him any thing, to write bad English ; for they are done with no care. So many Latin words are just put into as many English, without any regard to difference of idiom and construction ; whereas nothing

could be more effectual towards teaching a good style of English, than the early habit of translating Latin, if care were taken to compare the two languages together, and to accustom the learner to consult his ears, as well as his brains, in his translation. Composition is as much dependent on and facilitated by habit, as any other acquirement; and he who is timely taught its right principles, will very soon be able to put them in practice. If the lower division of the fifth form were to read what I have sketched out, I am very sure they would be more profitably employed than they are at present. But even this reading will be comparatively of little use, unless there are “collections”—to use a very appropriate old Oxford term—at the end of each school-time. Unless students are periodically examined in all they have been doing—unless they are made to “collect” and combine their knowledge, it will neither take root in their minds, nor produce any manner of harvest. At Eton, by a strange inversion of reason, and defiance of intelligible principle, all collective examination of a boy ceases as soon as he arrives at the fifth form; *i. e.* all motive for competition is removed, at the very moment when it ought to be applied.

An idle boy may lose his place when he gets into the fifth form, which no subsequent energy

can regain ; and a clever boy may GAIN a place at the same time, which no subsequent misconduct can permanently forfeit. The absence of all examination in the fifth form produces an equally evil effect on either denomination of boys ; for it hardens the idle, who has lost his place, and makes the clever careless, because he can gain no further promotion. Nor am I speaking upon mere unsupported theory ; many a boy DOES exert himself energetically while in the Remove, who thinks no more of exertion when he arrives at that “ slough of despond,” the fifth form. Now I state plain, intelligible, undeniable facts. I trust I shall not be answered solely with a sneer ; but I demand either an admission, on the part of the school, that their system is mischievous and absurd, or a show of reason to prove that it is right. Emulation, I may be told, is the parent of envy, and ought not to be encouraged in the young ; but emulation is also the main spring of noble and virtuous action. True, it may be perverted, as any virtue may, into a vice ; and though it should degenerate in the breasts of the vile into envy, yet this can be no more reason against its encouragement, than can be drawn against the building of a house, from the acknowledged fact, that it MAY tumble on its inhabitant’s head. In both cases, the best inten-

tions may be entirely frustrated ; and in both we recognize nothing but an universal law of our condition on earth. But emulation is, in the main, generous and virtuous. To my humble apprehension, there is nothing in the desire to excel in learning and character, either sordid or unbecoming a Christian. A morbid and sentimental genius, like Cowper's, may please itself by declaiming against the eternal operations of the human mind ; but the "TiROCINIUM," as a poem of REASON—as a PRACTICAL essay—is below the refutation of the nursery.

I cannot see why that emulation should be bad for BOYS, which is undeniably good for MEN. No man blushes to acknowledge that he has a desire to outstrip his fellows in virtue---in religion---in dignity---in honour---can it be wrong to instil this feeling into boyhood ? Nay, are not the responsible instructors of youth deeply culpable, if they neglect to encourage so virtuous and honourable an ambition ?

There is another principle, without the adoption of which, much of the good that might reasonably be anticipated from the changes I have suggested, will be lost. EVERY DIVISION SHOULD HAVE ITS EXCLUSIVE MASTER. A boy in the upper part of the fourth form does his lessons with FIVE different masters ; in the fifth form, with THREE. A boy, thus DISTRIBUTED, may be active with one master, and idle with another ;

whilst his real character can rarely be understood by any one, who has but a small subdivision of him to look after. A perseverance in this system is the more remarkable, because the "Remove" is the part of the school where, confessedly, most is done; mainly for this reason, because the system is, in that single instance, departed from, and the division is under the exclusive direction of one person. If the changes I have recommended were adopted, two masters would be gained, whose time is now almost entirely engaged in school hours by the looking over of exercises. One of these masters ought to be drafted off to the fifth form, and the other to the fourth. The head master's attention, during school hours, is so much occupied with the general superintendence of the school, that he cannot possibly have much time to bestow on the lessons; yet, by an unaccountable provision, he has a very large division; the consequence of which is, that less work is done in the highest, than in any other part of the school. The head master ought not to have above 30 boys to attend to; the remainder of his division should be the exclusive care of some one master; and I have already shown, that, if the system of wholesale original composition were reasonably modified, two masters would be left nearly unemployed in school hours.

Proceeding to the middle division of the fifth form, one original exercise, and a translation, such as I have already described, would be sufficient composition for the week. They might read two books of the Iliad, two plays of Euripides, edited by Porson, two books of Livy, two of Herodotus, and some portions of Juvenal and Catullus. The upper division, comprising the sixth form, which we suppose a student would take between three and four years to go through, ought to read three plays of Sophocles, as many of Æschylus and Aristophanes, three books of Thucydides, two books of Tacitus, the Satires and Epistles of Horace, (which boys in the lower part of the fifth form are certainly not capable of understanding,) a book of Lucretius, at least ONE of the larger Speeches of Demosthenes, and four of Cicero, three books of the Æneid, and a small quantity of Theocritus. There should be the same proportion of composition as in the other divisions, and religious instruction besides. In his passage through the fifth form, a boy ought, certainly, to be made acquainted, not only with the Gospels and Acts, but with Paley's Evidences, Grotius, and Tomline's Theology.

With regard to abstract science, we cannot expect *much*, but still SOMETHING may be done. A knowledge of four books of Euclid, and of

Algebra, may surely be required of every boy in the upper division. If a boy have talent for this kind of study, he will gain sufficient encouragement to proceed. But, at present, though an elementary knowledge of mathematics is essential to the passing a little-go at the Universities, the study is not even recognised as part of the public business of Eton. Every one of the changes I have suggested would tend to enlarge the sphere of competition for the boys. At present, if an Eton Student cannot do verses, he can do nothing. There is no reward proposed to a boy in the fifth form, but for composition, which is, unquestionably, the least useful of all excellencies in scholarship. I am fully aware what folly there is in exacting or expecting too much of a boy ; but I am also aware, that the opposite error of expecting too little, is, undoubtedly, worse ; and too little, is undoubtedly demanded of an Eton scholar ; but I am very far from believing, that I have given an outline of study, which may not easily be accomplished. For this purpose, several of the school-hours must, of course, be employed in a manner different from the present. Instead of spending three mornings of the week in repeating Ovid, Theocritus,---and, will it be believed?

--GREEK GRAMMAR, by heart, as is at present done, the fifth form must be interpreting the

great historians and poets. Surely, all the Homer, Virgil, and Horace, or Juvenal and Catullus, as it may be, that is construed in school, is quite sufficient for repetition, without superadding the work of the fourth form in the shape of Ovid, and Greek grammar. This last bit of work is really too absurd to be treated with sobriety. The Eton Greek Grammar is THE MEAN by which the formation of verbs, substantives, &c. may be taught ; but to persist in exacting the rules for verbs, after a boy has been reading Homer three or four years, is either to assume, or concede, that he does not YET know how to form the substantives and verbs. Learning Ovid and Theocritus by heart, are also, excellent employments, no doubt ; but there are others more necessary for a fifth form boy.

There is a circumstance connected with the school discipline, which, though it affects but a small portion of the scholars, yet, I think deserving of remark, from its involving an important principle, and its liability to produce serious individual mischief. The private tutors, who have the exclusive care of single pupils, ARE NOT REQUIRED TO RESIDE IN THE DAMES' HOUSES, where the tutors have a proper authority. It is a necessary principle in all schools, that the scholars be under the authority of the

masters ; but a boy who resides in a lodging-house at Eton, with his private tutor, is not under the authority of the school, as long as he is in his house ; therefore, after dark, all controul over the boy, on the part of the school, is at an end.

I suppose it happens at Eton, as it would in most places, that young men of the prospects, such as are usually the lot of private tutors, are acceptable guests at the various tables of the college ; and in the event of the tutor being absent on such a mission as the guest of a good dinner, I see no more likely mode by which the deserted and forlorn pupil can employ his time, than by seeking society OUT OF HIS LODGING, or else contenting himself with that which his Penates can afford him in the shape of conversation with the housemaid. I consider neither of these an eligible mode of disposing of a lad's leisure hours. Instances, indeed, have occurred, in which fruits of an objectionable and alarming nature have thus been produced.

I have, unconsciously, extended my remarks to a length which I did not contemplate, and yet have left very much unsaid. Finding fault is an irksome and invidious task ; but though I have felt compelled to undertake it, I must claim acknowledgment, that I have done so with no unfair or captious severity. I have made no

intentional misrepresentation ; if, through imperfect information, I have been betrayed into error, and it is possible I MAY have been, I shall be thankful for correction. I am by no means anxious to detract from the many excellencies of Eton—from the great liberality—sound principles—and thoroughly gentlemanlike tone which pervades the school ; nor have I the wish, supposing I had the power, to dim the lustre of the many great names it can boast ; but I may be permitted to doubt, whether the great Eton men have not been made great by THEIR OWN efforts, rather than by the instruction they received, or the direction and encouragement given to their minds in boyhood ;—in short, whether they have not been illustrious in SPITE rather than IN CONSEQUENCE, of the management of the school.

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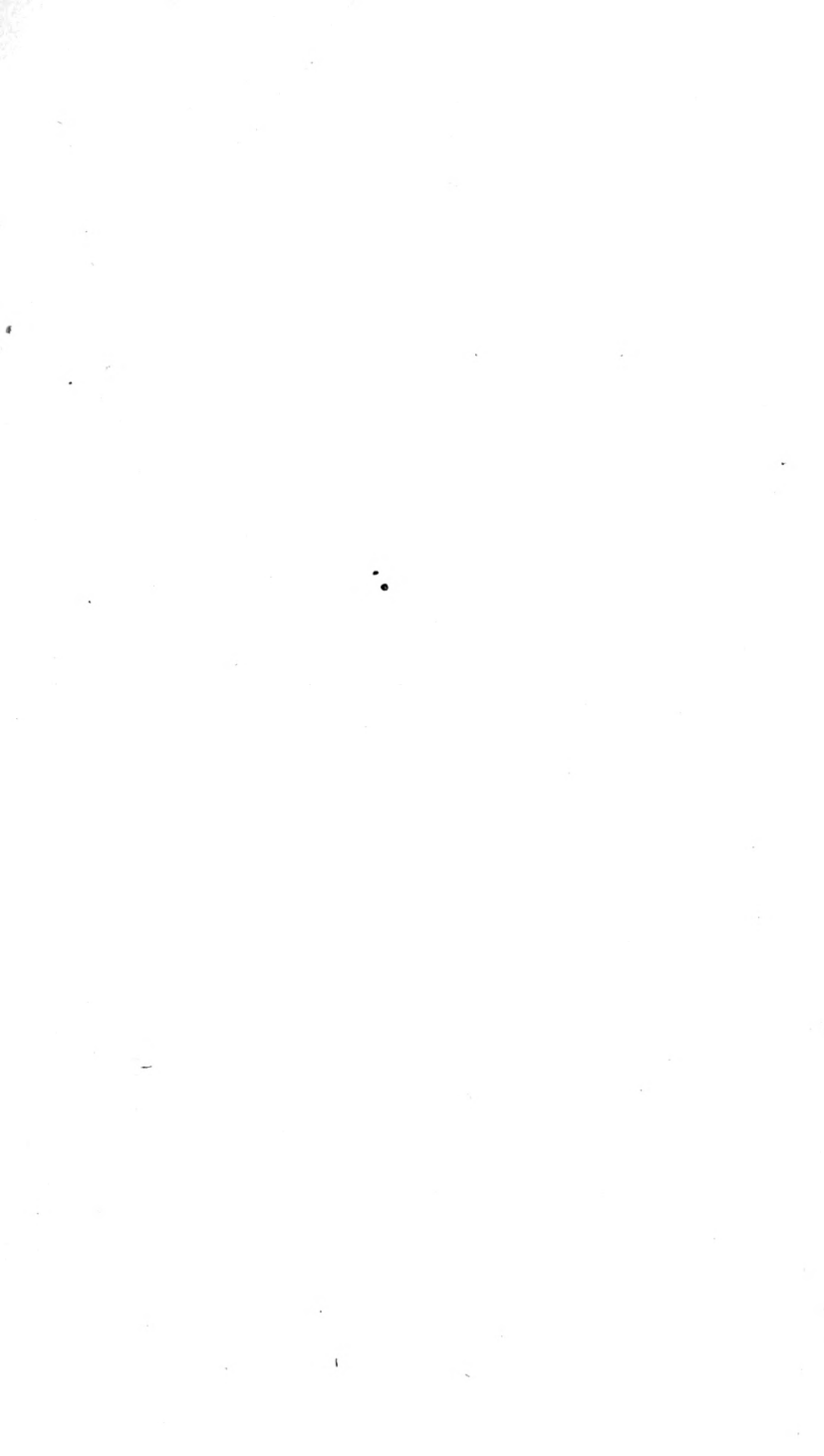
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